DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 118 884 CE 006 440

AUTHOR Mitchell, William E.
TITLE School Based Job Placement: A Dimension for the Delivery of Guidance Services. A Brief Overview of Counselor Involvement in a School Based Job Placement Service.
NOTE 12p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage
DESCRIPTORS *Counselor Role; *Guidance Services; *Job Placement; Models; Occupational Guidance; *Program Descriptions; School Community Relationship; School Industry Relationship; Secondary Education; Secondary School Counselors; Specialists; Student Placement; *Vocational Counseling; Vocational Education; Vocational Followup
IDENTIFIERS Ohio (Akron) Ohio (Summit County)

ABSTRACT

The Akron-Summit county Public Schools Job Placement Department utilizes four basic components: data, pre-employment preparation, preparation, placement, and follow-up. The model functions on the basis of broadly drawn and centrally coordinated employment regions or service areas and hence avoids problems which individual school districts operating independently and competing for job placement opportunities can generate. The model also employs placement specialists, people whose background and experience qualify them to work in the business community and within the school structure. Depending on student population, the placement specialists may be assigned to from three to five schools. In addition, each high school has one "contact" counselor who is responsible for coordinating and facilitating placement activities in conjunction with the placement specialist. Counselors are also responsible for coordinating and facilitiating the dissemination of pre-employment information to students. Through a coordinated program of graduate follow-up it is possible for counselors to serve as agents of educational renewal, in the sense that they can revise programs to ensure that incumbent students receive the maximum benefit from the experience of recent graduates. (JR)

****
* Documents acquired by ERIC include many informal unpublished *
* materials not available from other sources. ERIC makes every effort *
* to obtain the best copy available. Nevertheless, items of marginal *
* reproducibility are often encountered and this affects the quality *
* of the microfiche and hardcopy reproductions ERIC makes available *
* via the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). EDRS is not *
* responsible for the quality of the original document. Reproductions *
* supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made from the original. *
****

ED118884

SCHOOL BASED JOB PLACEMENT

A DIMENSION FOR THE DELIVERY OF GUIDANCE SERVICES

By: William E. Mitchell, Director
Akron-Summit County Public Schools
Job Placement Department

A Brief Overview Of Counselor Involvement In
A School Based Job Placement Service

CE 006 440

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

SCHOOL BASED JOB PLACEMENT

A DIMENSION FOR THE DELIVERY OF GUIDANCE SERVICES

The role of the guidance co[illegible]lor is one that is constantly being reevaluated in the light of [illegible]nging educational priorities. Rare is the counselor who is not a[illegible]e of this ongoing process and in fact, the individual who is not a[illegible]e certainly has considerable "catching up" to do.

Career guidance, vocational guidance, and the use of group guidance all point the way to the current thrust of maximizing the effectiveness of services to the entire student population. Unfortunately, these are terms clearly understood by few in education and even fewer in the general population.

If there was ever an urgency to clear the clouds of confusion, the TIME IS NOW! If many segments of the educational structure are unsure of the role and function of guidance counselors, then the general public can hardly be expected to be supportive of that which it does not comprehend or even worse, misunderstands.

An examination of the national educational landscape would reveal that public support is a critical issue and will become increasingly so with the passing of time.

Placement as a dimension of guidance has often been overlooked or believed to be a tertiary element to be dealt with when time was available. Time was seldom available and placement efforts have been sporadic at best.

CURRENT TRENDS

Placement provides for a method to round out a program of TOTAL GUIDANCE SERVICES. If the student is to be the focal point then it is only logical that schools need to emphasize services - not role.

School based placement and follow-up, judging by national trends, is truly an idea whose time has come, and as such, it behooves all guidance people to determine their stance vis-a-vis placement. It will not be our intent here to present an overview of a placement structure, (See Placement - Accountability, Communication, Coordination by Raymond A. Wasil, for a basic overview of a comprehensive school placement structure) but to illustrate how the guidance counselor functions in a placement model that has successfully operated for over four years.

THE AKRON MODEL

The Akron-Summit County Public Schools Job Placement Department, as developed by Ray Wasil, provided for a comprehensive systematic approach to the problem of youth employment, utilizing four basic components: data, pre-employment preparation, placement, and follow-up. Services are delivered to 19 high schools throughout Summit County from a central office and field offices.

There are some rather unique concepts concomitent with the model that should be explained at the outset. The first would be the use of an employment region or service area rather than individual school districts operating independently.

The success of a job placement service is entirely dependent upon the availability of jobs, and this creates the necessity for generating positive attitudes with business, industry, labor, and government sectors if jobs are to be available to the segment of the population with the highest unemployment rate: YOUTH. Barriers must be lowered and lines of communication opened, not only for the success of job placement but for the survival of the schools as we know them.

Operating a job placement service in a successful manner then becomes a vital tool to assist young people to their next step and also serves to generate positive attitudes toward the schools in a visible way that can readily be comprehended by the public. Anything that can be done with a minimum amount of jargon and philosophy and has visible results will be viewed positively by those whose knowledge of the educational structure is scant.

EMPLOYMENT REGIONS OR SERVICE DISTRICTS

To maximize the effectiveness of a job placement effort, the largest and most logical employment or service region feasible should be chosen. With the spread of co-op programs, NABS, and other youth employment programs there has also been a proportionate rise in the number of people contacting employers for jobs, as well as bordering school districts competing for employment slots. To the employer, one program is confused with all the others and the result is often a negative one, to the detriment of both the school and the student. Duplication of effort must be eliminated.

The employment region or service district eliminates these negative factors if all employment efforts are carefully coordinated and centralized. The careful "orchestration" of employer contacts is of prime importance and also benefits everyone concerned. This also allows the schools to put the best foot forward and build working relationships with employers who will no longer feel harassed or pressured into something they are unsure of. Scattered and sporadic business contacts are not going to yield positive results. Positive image building is a continuous process requiring the employment of the same efforts and programs utilized by successful sales people. This is a sales effort and everyone will profit if successful.

THE PLACEMENT SPECIALIST

The second concept that should be explained would be the use of placement specialists in this model. The placement specialists are people whose backgrounds and experiences would qualify them to successully work in the business community and within the school structure. The development of job sites and the preparation, placement, and follow-up of young people on jobs would necessitate a person who can work in both worlds. A degree is not a requirement. The placement specialist works twelve months a year and has a flexible work schedule that conforms to the work schedules of businesses or industries where job development or follow-up efforts are taking place. The placement specialist acts as an outreach and resource person in the schools. (Placement specialists may be assigned to multiple school districts when an employment region or service district is utilized.) In this model, each placement specialist has from three to five schools depending on the student population.

The specific areas of responsibility in which the placement specialist functions are:

1. Gathers data on each student that he is responsible for. Cooperation of counselors, teachers, and administrative staff and the use of cumulative records are necessary.
2. Coordinates pre-employment clinics for in-school and out-of-school youth.
3. Collects information on local and national employment trends and disseminates the data to concerned school staff.
4. Shares business-industry resources with career education coordinators and interested teachers.
5. Visits business-industry to initiate and promote placement of students.

6. Coordinates the development of special programs or opportunities for special students - (handicapped, special education.)
7. Participates in organizations or represents special groups in business-industry (Dental Association, Restaurant Association, Personnel Groups).
8. Coordinates, develops, and maintains current data on employers, placements, business-industry contacts, and employment records on youth eligible for services.
9. Assists in follow-up studies.
10. Assists in the development of visual aids and materials to be used in school, business-industry, and the public.
11. Provides placement or referral services for youth exiting school without diplomas.
12. Establishes and coordinates youth employment committees in local districts.

THE GUIDANCE COUNSELOR AS "FACILITATOR"

In each high school, one counselor is identified as a "contact" counselor. This person is responsible for the coordination of all placement activities within the school and is the facilitator for these activities in conjunction with the placement specialist, assuring an efficient operation.

Both the guidance counselor and the placement specialist have key roles to play in the delivery of services to the students. Each performs a service best suited to his or her interests, abilities, and qualifications. The outreach and resource activities of the placement specialist maximize and enhance the role of the counselor and the counselor provides the necessary in-school supportive services while acting as a facilitator.

Counselors have often been involved in placement as a means of aiding individual students on the basis of need. However, these efforts were rarely systematic or comprehensive. Due to the wider scope and systematic use of the basic operating components in this model the range, quality, and quantity of services is far greater and provides a greater degree of visibility for the counselor.

SPECIFIC AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY OR AREAS IN WHICH THE GUIDANCE COUNSELOR SHOULD FUNCTION AS A "FACILITATOR"

1. Assists the placement specialist in gathering data on each student.
2. Assists the placement specialist in the use of cumulative records and provides necessary background information.
3. Coordinates pre-employment clinics and identifies student need areas.
4. Maintains a resource center for students and teachers.
5. Assists in follow-up studies.
6. Provides group guidance activities and career information.
7. Does testing and interpretation.
8. Prepares materials for pre-employment preparation.
9. Utilizes follow-up data in a manner that provides for follow-through.
10. In-services teachers.
11. Refers and schedules students for the placement specialist.
12. Maintains communication with parents.
13. Makes recommendations for the curricular change and program improvement.

THE GUIDANCE COUNSELOR AND PRE-EMPLOYMENT PREPARATION

School personnel have often assumed far too much with regard to the knowledge and sophistication of high school students related to basic pre-employment information.

Employers are quick to point out how wrong these assumptions are. Individual teachers sometimes cover resumes, applications, etc. but the efforts are seldom organized or coordinated. In some cases, the information has little carryover because the students are not "job ready". This is certainly a need area that the counselor should consider moving into. The situation might tie the counselor to teacher in-service within this area or to group guidance or a combination of the two. Any efforts made will be more than what is being done now. This is a block of information that all students should receive before exiting school. The counselor is the ideal person to facilitate this action and the need for teacher involvement is evident.

Some basic questions must be answered before a pre-employment information and group guidance program is structured.

1. What segment of the student population should be involved?
2. What people in the school and/or community should be involved?
3. What information should be disseminated? (need areas, goals, outcomes, etc.)
4. What should the time frame be? (length, duration, etc.)

Once these questions are answered a working knowledge of what <u>should be</u> done has been arrived at and need areas have been identified. Chances are that what <u>should be</u>, does not fit the picture in terms of the realities in a given building.

Those who are not practitioners of the art of the possible will simply abandon the idea at this point and another solution to an identified problem will be relegated to the dust bin.

Those who are practitioners of the art of the possible will make every attempt to balance what <u>should be</u> with the realities of what <u>can be</u>. Whatever the situation there is enough working room within the boundaries of the possible to accomplish something.

The difference between the two approaches is simply the degree of commitment on the part of the counselor to serve the needs of the students.

Once the commitment is made the rest will fall in line.

A CASE IN POINT

Recognition of need areas on the part of one counselor led to the development of mini-courses in an urban high school. This was done without any schedule changes, additional staffing or additional cost, and resulted in a commitment to support and continue this training from the other counselors and the administrators.

1. Many seniors were in first period study halls and this was the group selected for the pilot mini-course. These seniors were given the option of attending the group guidance sessions elsewhere in the building for a period of three weeks.
2. The guidance counselor working in conjunction with the placement specialist developed a course of study, gathered materials and contacted community people to provide resource information.
3. The guidance counselor, placement specialist and community resource people conducted the sessions on a daily basis covering such topics as: Interest Inventories, Values, The World of Work, How To Get a Job, Keeping a Job, Attitudes, Attendance, Resumes, Applications, Getting a Better Job, Advanced Training, Colleges and Technical Schools, The Interview, Public and Private Employment Agencies, etc.

As the sessions progressed attendance grew and it became apparent that interest was great enough to repeat the sessions and the other members of the guidance department became curious. The curiousity grew into support and the support became a commitment. In time, administrators and classroom teachers attended some of the sessions.

The administrators who had been non-commital at the onset now asked if scheduling could be arranged to implement this on a continuing basis for all grade levels (altering the scope and nature to each grade level.)

Some teachers inquired as to how they could become involved and volunteered time from their planning periods to assist. In short, SUCCESS.

SOME FACTORS TO CONSIDER

1. By meeting student needs in a group setting the one to one counseling load is reduced. This has been clearly demonstrated in actual practice.
2. The group setting provides a degree of visibility for the counselor to students, teachers and administrators.
3. Feed-back will be positive - enthusiasm is contagious.
4. Providing help in this area is a guidance service that all segments of the community can relate to and appreciate.
5. Start with those staff people who are interested and willing and build your foundation on their support.

THE GUIDANCE COUNSELOR AND FOLLOW-UP

A structured follow-up of graduates is a vital necessity. Data will provide accountability and becomes the basis for curricular design and redesign. The counselor then becomes an agent for real, vital and necessary change and modification as the counselor is a person who is concerned with all the needs of the student population. The counselor is in a unique position from which to view and comment upon the educational structure without built-in biases or tunnel vision which are the occupational hazards of other segments.

The placement specialist working twelve months a year maintains contact with the students for a year after graduation. Periodic and systematic follow-ups are conducted by the placement specialist.

This information should be utilized in working with current students as the impact upon them is far greater than abstract preachments or examples. Young people can relate to the successes or failures of their peer group in a direct manner.

Direct involvement in follow-up places the counselor in a unique position. Armed with data concerning the effectiveness of the school program, the counselor is directly tied to the entire educational process. Acting as an agent for educational termination in the secondary schools also allows the counselor to become an agent for educational renewal. The implications for administrative policy and teacher in- service are vast. Properly used, follow-up data is another resource which adds to the total effectiveness of the guidance function.

MAINTAINING PERSPECTIVE

The counselor, above all, should be in the forefront to insist that schools function to serve children and young people. Too often the opposite is true. A program of TOTAL GUIDANCE SERVICES is an effective means of maintaining this principle. School based job placement is one dimension of this.